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reasonings are described as "perpetual stultiloquy" (p. 83), and Hegel's Philosophy of Religion "seems to be a prolonged Hum-m-m-m" (p. 205, footnote).

W. H. SHELDON.

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY.

Identité et réalité. Par E. MEYERSON. Paris, Félix Alcan, 1908. — pp. vii, 432.

In what does a scientific explanation of a given phenomenon consist? — this is the question with which M. Meyerson's study of the philosophy of science, or epistemology, is introduced. The historical answers to the question may be arranged in two classes: the first, represented, *e. g.*, by Comte and Helmholtz, reduces causality to mere law of sequence and maintains that any fact is adequately explained by subsumption under the general law; the second, as illustrated, *e. g.*, by Lucretius and Leibniz, makes the principle of causality fundamental, without which there could be no empirical laws. The two principles thus distinguished are that of "legality" — so to translate the "*Gesetzlichkeit*" of Helmholtz — and that of "scientific causality," the denotation of the two concepts being apparently coterminous with descriptive and purely empirical science on the one hand, and explicative and theoretical science on the other.

"It is not true that the sole end of science is action, nor that it is dominated by the desire of economy in that action. Science also aims to make us *understand* nature" (p. 353). The principle of causality, "causa aequat effectum," which is essentially one of permanence throughout the temporal series, is assumed continually in the thought of science, as well as of common sense, and its supposition is an inherent "tendance d'esprit humaine." Descriptive laws, however, while they are adequate to economy of action, do not give intellectual satisfaction. A notable historical example of this further demand of the intelligence is found in Newton, who, having formulated the laws of gravitating masses, still felt that he had not *explained* gravitation. The chapter on "Mechanism" presents the great historical attempts at explicative hypotheses, and the following chapters, "Principle of Inertia," "Conservation of Matter," and "Conservation of Energy," show the important rôle played by the conviction of identity in time in certain regions of science. But any mechanical hypothesis has two irrational limits: one, on the side of the subject, in that it cannot explain the facts of consciousness, and the other, on the side of the object, in that it has to leave unexplained the interaction of the ultimate quantities with which it deals. Under the caption of "Non-mechanical Theories," the author discusses the views of Aristotle and Ostwald, among others, while still sustaining the thesis, "L'identité est le cadre éternel de notre esprit" (p. 260). The chapter preceding the general "Conclusion," makes an analysis, more detailed than in previous portions of the work, of the concepts of common sense. The process by which the concepts of this lower stage of reflection have arisen is unconscious, but in other respects strictly analogous to that by which scientific theories have been framed; the principle of identity in time plays a preponderant and determining rôle in each.

There is in the situation, however, a strange paradox. The end of science is knowledge of natural phenomena, yet in postulating intelligibility — *i. e.*, complete accord with the principle of causality — science annihilates itself; for if the principle of identity be universally applied and followed to its logical conclusion the result is a Parmenidean world with no ground for the explanation of phenomena. Nevertheless, we may not discard the principle; it is at least of use, indeed necessary, as a working hypothesis, but it is also something more. For nature is not merely ordered and subject to laws of sequence, but it is partly intelligible, although there may not be *complete* accord between our understanding and fact, *i. e.*, between the principle of identity and reality. The regulative principle, so to speak, which the author would seem to enjoin on science is to use the *a priori* principle of causality, or identity, as far as possible in the progressive approach to the highest possible degree of intelligibility, which is the goal of science.

The reader can hardly fail to be grateful for the unity and orderly arrangement, the perspicuity of thought no less than of style which characterizes M. Meyerson's contribution to the study of the philosophy of the sciences. And whatever attitude he may take toward the author's conclusions, he must admit the analysis to be clear and consistent. The extensive references to sources, ancient, mediæval, and modern, add greatly to the value of the work and make it, especially to the reader whose point of view is not wholly in agreement with that of the author, an inspiration and valuable guide to further investigation of the problem.

S. GUY MARTIN.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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